

the SRO program was evident in August when a gunman opened fire at Orange High School in Hillsborough. The immediate response of the school resource officer and a former state trooper on campus who apprehended the gunman prevented a more serious incident.

“We owe it to our children to be prepared for the worst, and to know that we have prepared in every way possible,” said Cooper, who in response to school threats had made rapid-response training part of basic law enforcement classes. “In the event of a tragedy, educators and law enforcement have to make quick decisions, and learning how to make the best choices is critical.”

In 2002 and 2003, the Attorney General’s office distributed Critical Incident Response Kits to every public, private and charter school in North Carolina and now more than 1,500 schools have completed training. These kits include such things as emergency contact information, architectural blueprints for the school, and evacuation plans.

In addition, DPI conducts an annual review of required school safety plans for every school and school district. The Office of School Planning requires new school building plans to include crime prevention measures such as easy access to school property for emergency vehicles and limiting shrubbery that would provide easy hiding places for criminals.

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